



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY

Chaplains Day is celebrated on February 3 in recognition of four Army chaplains who acted in the spirit of heroic sacrifice and humanitarianism on board the sinking U.S.A.T. Dorchester in 1943.

The Dorchester was sailing across the Atlantic Ocean, packed to capacity when a German submarine fired a torpedo at the ship and sank it.

The four chaplains aboard the ship were: Reverend George Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Father John Washington, and Reverend Clark Poling.

Witnesses remembered their courage, support, and prayers for the many distressed people on board. They offered their life jackets to four people in need and as a consequence had to remain on sinking ship.

The United States Government awarded them the Purple Heart, Distinguished Service Cross, and a Special Medal for Heroism in 1943.

WW II Veteran Honored	2
VA Research Study.....	2
Black Hills State University Military Appreciation Night	3
VA Medical Debt Threshold	4
Midwest Honor Flight Ride.....	5
Crossroads	6
SDDVA Upcoming Events.....	7



WORLD WAR II VETERAN HONORED

World War II Veteran Carl Riehl was honored this week at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home.

SDDVA staff presented Carl with a Military Order of the Purple Heart lapel pin and an SDDVA WWII coin.

Riehl served in the U.S. Army of Occupation in Japan at the end of the war.



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

VA Research Study for OIF/OEF/OND Veterans



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA

Investigators: Drs. Jeffrey Simons, Raluca Simons, and Pat Ronan

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>What:</u> Study of stress and health behaviors • <u>Where:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sioux Falls VA - University of South Dakota – Vermillion • <u>You need to be:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Between the ages of 18 and 60 years old - Have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan • <u>The study will involve 22 visits over a period of 2 years</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>If you participate you will receive:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to assist future veterans by participating in research aimed at improving veteran health. - Compensation for your time and travel may include \$50 for completing a baseline assessment, \$50 for each of 10 in office assessments, and up to \$135/week for each of 17 self-monitoring weeks completed, depending on number of completed assessments (up to ~2500) |
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For more information please contact:

The research team at (605) 658-3730, or email
hbr@usd.edu, raluca.simons@usd.edu, or patrick.ronan@va.gov

BHSU MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT EVENT

Black Hills State University will be hosting a special Military Appreciation Night event on Saturday, February 5th for active military and veterans.

All are invited to come out and support the BHSU basketball teams as they take on Colorado State University Pueblo.

If you're active military or a veteran you get in free at the door. You'll also get two free tickets for guests.



SATURDAY, FEB. 5, 2022

MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT

All Military/Veterans will receive
2 free tickets at the door

**BHSU Basketball @ The Young Center
vs. Colorado State University Pueblo**



Women's @ 3:55 pm | Men's @ 5:55 pm

Persons with disabilities requesting accommodations for these events can contact Colleen Mischke (605-642-6269), email Colleen.Mischke@BHSU.edu

VA ESTABLISHES NEW THRESHOLD FOR REPORTING BENEFIT AND MEDICAL DEBT

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs published a final rule in the [Federal Register](#), Feb. 2, amending VA's procedures for reporting debt to consumer reporting agencies.

These revisions change the VA's minimum requirements for reporting debt.

The rule also provides opportunity for relief and helps veterans experiencing financial hardship. This is especially important now that the department has resumed debt collection activities as of Oct. 1, 2021.

"Reporting debt to consumer reporting agencies impacts credit worthiness and negative reports may cause financial distress for veterans," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "Late remittance or nonpayment can lead to debt collection. However, overpayment of benefits funds is often debt accrued through no fault of the veteran.

These new changes will result in a 99% reduction in unfavorable debt reported to consumer reporting agencies, thus reducing financial distress for veterans."

Previously, roughly 530,000 allowable VA debts were reported annually to CRAs resulting in approximately 60,000 delinquent VA debts being referred to credit reporting agencies each year.

The [Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020](#) authorizes the VA Secretary to prescribe regulations for establishing the minimum threshold and methodology used to determine debt reported by the department. Under these new amendments, the VA will not report to CRAs until all available collection efforts are exhausted and the specified debt becomes classified as not collectible. Additionally, the Department will not report debts owed by veterans determined to be catastrophically disabled and entitled to VA's cost-free health care due to low income.

"This action by the VA sets an important new standard to halt the financial distress many families face when medical debt unfairly hits their credit report," said Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Rohit Chopra. "I expect that many in the health care industry will seek to follow Secretary McDonough's lead to end the practice of forcing patients to pay up through aggressive credit report coercion."

Relief options will continue for veterans still experiencing financial distress. Enhanced relief options include repayment plans, waivers and temporary hardship suspensions.

The VA will also continue to report any debt incurred by individuals who have committed fraud, misrepresentation, or bad faith.

Veterans and beneficiaries with questions regarding overpayments of benefits may reference [frequently asked questions](#) or call 800-827-0648. For questions about medical and pharmacy copayment debt, veterans can contact the Health Resource Center at 866-400-1238.

ANNOUNCING THE 2ND ANNUAL



HONOR RIDE

MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT



"RIDING TO KEEP THEM FLYING"

Sunday, June 12, 2022 | 2:30 PM

Registration begins at 12:30 PM at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance. Honor a Veteran you know and ride to raise funds for Midwest Honor Flight. Ride includes a slow salute past the Sioux Falls VA Hospital before a ceremony at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery.

MORE INFORMATION & PRE-REGISTRATION:
MIDWESTHONORFLIGHT.ORG/RIDE

All proceeds from this event go directly towards future Honor Flights and more importantly, our local Veterans.

Calling all Guard and Reserve
Retirees and Spouses!!
clear up the fog of retirement

CROSSROADS

March 10
5:15-8:00 MST
virtual event on Zoom

TOPICS COVERED

- Pay
- Insurance
- Survivor Benefits
- Transition Assistance
- Survivor Outreach
- Military Funeral Honors
- VA Topics
- Financial Assistance

RSVP IS REQUIRED

To register contact:

Mr. Kenny Wheeler -Transition Assistance Advisor

605-737-6669

kenneth.d.wheeler.ctr@army.mil

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 5—BHSU Military Appreciation Night—Young Center—Spearfish
Feb 21—State Offices Closed
Feb 18-20—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
Feb 26-27—SD Vietnam Veterans & Era Reunion—Ramada Inn—Mitchell
Feb 27-Mar 2—DAV Mid Winter Conference—Washington, DC
Feb 27-Mar 3—National VFW Legislative Conference—Washington, DC
Mar 10—Crossroads—Virtual Event—5:15 pm—8:00 pm (MST)
Mar 26—Stand Up for Women Veterans Retreat—Our Savior Lutheran Church (909) W. 33rd Street—Sioux Falls—8:30 am—1:30 pm (CT)
Apr 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Apr 8-10—DAV of South Dakota State Convention—Rushmore Hotel and Suites (445 Mt. Rushmore Road)—Rapid City
Apr 20—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Military Heritage Alliance Building—Spirit of America Room—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
Jun 9-12—State VFW Convention—Ramada Inn—Mitchell
Jun 12—Midwest Honor Flight Annual Honor Ride—SD Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls
Jun 16-19—State American Legion Conference—Watertown
Jul 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Jul 18-23—National Veterans Golden Age Games—Sioux Falls
Aug 6-9—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
Aug 14-19—Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention—Rapid City
Aug 15-17—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School
Sep 1—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair
Sep 1-5—South Dakota State Fair
Oct 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Dec 17—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <https://military.sd.gov/>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

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